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ABSTRACT

This publication discusses oral history, its potential as a teaching tool, and its application in a variety of different classroom situations from the elementary through the post-secondary levels. The purpose is to show the great variety of uses and possibilities for using oral history in the classroom. There are six major sections. The articles in Section One, "Focus on Friends and Family," examine different ways of using oral history to learn more about family and friends. In one article a high school foreign language teacher describes a class project that her students were involved with entitled "Who are You? We are Reflections of Italo Americans." Excerpts from student interviews are included. Section Two "Focus on Aging" describes three oral history projects dealing with older adults, aging, and cultural perceptions of old age. In one project, eight elementary and middle school classroom teachers were paired with representatives of elderly care facilities within walking distance of their schools. In a series of seminars, this group learned about oral history techniques and then collaboratively planned the details of a variety of projects bringing young and old together. Section Three "Focus on a Community" describes three community projects. One contrasts the past and present of two communities, another offers oral history as a balance to the more usual history of the town's famous people, while the third often gives a local perspective on historical events in the larger world. The two projects described in Section Four "Focus on Ethnicity" used oral history to increase students' awareness of ethnicity--their own and others. Section Five, "Focus on a Time," describes oral history projects which investigated particular times in the past. The publication concludes with Section Six, "Resources," which cites human and print resources in oral history. (Author/RM)

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KALEIDOSCOPE 20

ORAL HISTORY IN THE CLASSROOM

VOICES, a project to train teachers in the techniques of oral history and to promote its use in the classroom, presents this issue of *Kaleidoscope*. This is by no means a complete picture of all the work being done with oral history in Massachusetts schools and communities. It is a sampler, designed to show the great variety of uses and possiblilities for oral history in the classroom.

Edited and Compiled by the VOICES PROJECT
Barbara Meyer, Barbara Perry, Ellen Sarkisian

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—B.M., B.P. and E.S.

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PREFACE

During the bicentennial year of 1976 I was asked to write a brief history of the Concord Trinitarian Congregational Church which was celebrating, coincidentally, its one-hundred-fiftieth year of existence. Because of its evolvement from the first church (1635) in that town, its historic significance is unique.

Most of my research was done in the town's archives, but much of the more colorful and dramatic information was gathered from older people who provided me with oral history. A clergyman who lived in California in the early 1900's told me of the time he was called to serve the Concord church. He recalled how he and his wife and two children traveled east in their Model T. Each night they parked on the roadside and slept in the fields; their water for bathing and other uses came from the automobile's radiator which was replenished at the nearest house the next day; and the trip to Concord took thirty days.

Another eighty-one year-old man related one of his boyhood experiences to me. He said that when he was a youth he would ask his father's permission to drive the horse and buggy to church on Sunday mornings. The father always gave his approval but never failed to caution his son to be careful because he *might* meet an automobile.

It is easy to see how the foregoing illustrations, not available in traditional histories, could lead to a lively classroom discussion. Oral history is an important tool for all teachers. It represents a seldom tapped treasure which can enliven and enrich our whole culture. Every school district ought to include it as an integral part of the curriculum. This *Kaleidoscope* serves, I believe, as a stimulant for taking the first step.

Robert A. Watson
Director of Curriculum Services

ORAL HISTORY IN

This issue of *Kaleidoscope* is devoted to oral history, its potential as a teaching tool and its application in a variety of different classroom situations. Oral history is a broad term for which there are many definitions and descriptions. In the strictest academic sense, oral history is an end in itself, the creation of historically valid primary source materials by means of the planned, tape-recorded interview.

For educators, oral history is a means as well as an end. It provides students with a personal way of gaining understanding, insights, and skills. As practiced by the contributors to this issue, oral history includes elements of folklore, oral tradition, anthropology, and autobiography as well as social, ethnic, and local history. It has been done by students of all ages within a variety of disciplines (alone or integrated) including history, English, arts, foreign language, psychology,and bilingual classes.

Oral history then, as the term is used in *Kaleidoscope* refers to a broad concept, a method adaptable to many ends. The element common to all, the basic experience, involves listening to and learning from someone's spoken memories. The narrator may be eighteen or eighty. The events recalled may have happened last year or seventy-five years ago. The primary purpose may be to learn about a time, a place, a person, an event, an ethnic group, or a way of doing something. The setting may be a formal interview or a more informal conversation. The event may be taped, noted by hand, or remembered. The resulting information and insights may be literally transcribed or transformed into an expressive statement. What is universally true is that someone sits down, listens to someone else's spoken memories, and then creates something from the experience.

Oral history is not a one-shot deal, nor is it a gimmick. Its legitimate place is as an adjunct to the regular curriculum. Oral history is not intended to replace traditional sources of information but rather to supplement, to complement, to raise issues, to cast events in a more personal light. Oral history's great danger as a tool for the classroom is its seductiveness: it's fun, flashy, and appears to be easy. It is very easy to do oral history badly—to send students out unprepared and then to be uncritical of what they bring back. Enthusiasm is not a substitute for training. Oral history can only fulfill its promise as a legitimate means of gaining historical insight if the practitioners are trained, knowledgeable, and sensitive—this is as true for nine year-olds as for adults. It is too easy to send students out with tape recorders to "find someone who can talk about..." This not only does an injustice to the students who are signaled that superficiality and glibness will suffice, but even more important, it violates the lives of others.

Students of all ages should receive adequate and continuing training and evaluation in interviewing methods, beginning with a discussion of techniques, and followed by practice interviews with peers, family, and acquaintances. In addition to interview training, students must be a part of the conceptualization and preliminary stages of a project. These stages include: research of a more traditional sort (to be constantly re-evaluated in the light of interview findings) and a thorough brainstorming of all themes, topics, and questions related to the subject matter.

THE CLASSROOM

Most important, an honest attempt should be made to raise the students' awareness level of their own assumptions and preconceptions - those filters and biases which may prevent students from approaching their subjects with the required openness and objectivity. It is interesting to begin a project with a stated list of assumptions (these will include stereotypes), and to review these periodically as the interviews progress.

Through this preparation process, students begin to develop the required skills, while at the same time acquiring an appreciation for the seriousness of their task and the responsibilities entailed in turning to another human being instead of a textbook for information.

Students should be challenged to participate in the oral history process at the highest level of which they are capable. For high school students this can be just as rigorous and demanding as that practiced by professional historians, but even for young children, oral history in scaled-down versions is appropriate and desirable as a mode of inquiry. To practice oral history or indeed any method of historical investigation successfully, one must have moved along a continuum of skills, acquiring new ones as they are developmentally appropriate. Through an oral history project, many different levels of skill objectives can be met: asking questions; formulating hypotheses; collecting and evaluating data; categorizing and ordering information; comparing, contrasting and analyzing information; drawing conclusions.

Oral history for young children, whether it involves a five year-old asking one question about the old days, or two sixth graders talking with a seventy year-old about the type of sled she rode, or several third graders looking at old photographs of their community with a group of older adults is certainly not oral history in the academic sense, but it does meet the criteria of collecting spoken memories while stimulating the inquiry process by teaching students to question, hypothesize, and compare. It introduces them to the way in which historians work and can be used as an adjunct to formal research as well as a vehicle for raising questions of subjectivity and interpretation. In addition to laying a foundation of historical skills and awareness, oral history is exciting and feels important to students. It brings them into contact with the real world and concrete experience. That students like oral history is an important consideration in these days of dwindling enrollments in high school and college history courses. Oral history definitely has a role to play in generating and nurturing interest in history from the earliest school years.

The work presented in this journal illustrates a wide range of exciting possibilities for the use of oral history in the classroom. It was created by students of all ages, from third grade to post-secondary. The oral histories were not done in a vacuum. They are the result of cooperation between schools and various senior facilities, ethnic groups, local institutions, arts groups, and interested citizens. These collaborations reinforce the point that oral history is a unique method of bringing together, in meaningful activity, groups that are all too often segregated.

BASIC SKILLS THRO

Educators have always had the somewhat awesome responsibility of teaching young people basic skills of communication and inquiry-reading, speaking, listening, writing, thinking; they have also continually looked for ways of insuring that their teaching does not end with mere exposure, but rather results in skill acquisition and retention. Oral history is one strategy which does allow real teaching of basic skills to take place.

Too often the plea for a return to the basics has implied a necessary retreat from experiential learning, from innovative education. It is not only possible, but undoubtedly preferable, to intergrate basics with experiential learning, rather than to have the basics relegated to some isolated corner of education. As students see the applicability of skills and concepts to the larger world in which they live, they will see a reason for learning. It is only then that learning in its total sense can, and will, occur. When a class is engaged in an oral history project, the students have to be able to communicate with the interviewees and each other, or nothing will happen. They have to be able to read, to speak, to listen, to write, to think; and to do so, they must have certain basic skills. They have to develop skills of reading, or preliminary research into the topic under discussion can not take place; they have to develop skills of speaking and listening, or the interview will result in no new information, insights, or understanding; they have to develop skills of writing, or the interview will be unintelligible to readers; they have to develop skills of critical thinking, or thoughtful analysis of the information gathered in the interview will be impossible. Because students see a pragmatic reason for the learning, it can now take place. Motivated to do oral history because of its context in real life, students are also motivated to do it well. They see themselves as recorders of history, and preserving memories for the record means remembering details—the ordering of events, the punctuation, the spelling. That motivation to learn basic communication and inquiry skills is intensified when students know they will be responsible for creating a product that will have to bear up to the scrutiny of themselves, each other, and an outside audience. Above all, oral history provides a special impetus because it is fun, it is a way to meet people, it is a way to feel a part of the larger community.

We as educators are responsible for helping young people develop those skills which will enable them to both survive and thrive in the world community. In addition to teaching them to read, to write, to speak, to listen, and to think, we have to add one more item to that list of basics—the ability to empathize with, and subsequently to better understand, their fellow humans. Through oral history, all of these basic skills can be developed with an eye toward mastery.

Following are some oral history activities for students within each of the basic skill areas. Any of them may be done in conjunction with others, or in isolation. Only a few of the many possibilities have been listed.

UGH ORAL HISTORY

READING

Research your topic prior to the interview, using at least three sources.

Read and summarize each of the interview transcripts.

SPEAKING/LISTENING

Conduct the interview, paying special attention to techniques of good interviewing.

Present your findings to the class, differentiating between fact and opinion.

WRITING

Write up a direct transcription of the interview, paying special attention to punctuation.

Write up one interview in several modes - eg. fictional memoir, poem, play, autobiography.

THINKING

Prior to research on interviews, develop hypotheses about the topic; later test these hypotheses against collected data.

After doing research on the topic, raise questions about the information as presented; try to gain insight into possible answers during the interview.

FOCUS ON FRIENDS AND FAMILY

1. WE ARE ITALO-*AMERICANS*

Who: high school students
Unique feature: improving foreign language skill

2. DOG TONGUE PATCH

Who: college students
Unique feature: teaching speech through oral history

3. BEGINNINGS

Who: sixth graders
Unique feature: establishing group identity and cohesiveness

The three articles in this section focus on different ways of using oral history to learn more about family and friends. In recent years, the recording of family history has become something of an American phenomenon. Collecting genealogies as well as the reminiscences of older family members are valuable methods of discovering and preserving roots. Family history is both a source of pride and an opportunity to share across generations. School projects incorporating family history have been favorably received by parents who welcome the chance to think and talk about subjects often neglected in the rush of events.

In addition to providing students with information about the past, interviews with family members and friends are sources of new insight. This creates a climate for greater understanding.

Although it is an end in itself, interviewing family and friends is also an ideal stepping stone toward more ambitious projects involving the larger community. Interviewing skills can only be developed over time and with a great deal of practice. The logical first step is to begin this process in the comfortable environment of classroom and home.

WHO ARE YOU? WE ARE REFLECTIONS OF ITALO-AMERICANS

Oral history is a way to help students understand more about their family's ethnic background and the cultural traditions that enrich it. The efforts of Shirley Anne Wilson and fifteen of her foreign language students at Woburn High School resulted in the book, *Who Are You? We Are Reflections of Italo-Americans*. Mrs. Wilson describes the project:

It seemed to me that in a community where twenty-six percent of the population is Italo-American living in an extended family situation, a purely academic approach to the study of the Italian language would not be appropriate. There had to be a better way to integrate community resources, the students' own experiences, and the high school curriculum. True, I wanted the students to practice aural-oral skills and to review grammar, vocabulary, and composition writing. Yet I felt something was missing. Late summer 1978, I came across a history book that was written in the form of firsthand accounts. Here was the method for which I had been searching. What better way to teach appreciation of ethnic heritage and cultural pluralism, while at the same time reviewing basic skills, than to have students interview their own grandparents?

So, equipped with a tape recorder, note pad, and a solid measure of enthusiasm, the students began a project which lasted ten weeks and turned out to be "one of the best learning experiences" of their high school careers. The assignment involved the students' interviewing their grandparents in Italian, transcribing the interviews in Italian, and translating the results into English. The interview topics included: immigration problems, adjusting to life in the United States, living through the Depression, coping with World Wars I and II, and changes in the political, social, and educational aspects of the city of Woburn.

The oral history project promoted better communication and understanding among the generations, enabling the students to gain a richer sense of their own identity. History, language learning, sociology, and economics no longer seemed esoteric areas of study. Learning was relevant and direct. As one participant said so well, "After all my grandfather went through, I don't feel right doing nothing with my life."

Who Are You? We Are Reflections of Italo-Americans **shows many sides of the Italian immigrant experience. The following is an excerpt from one interview in the book.**

Leonard Barbo
Interviewers: Andrew Clivio and Laura Melaragni

The following interview is with Mr. Leonard Barbo, who was born in southern Italy in the early 1900's. He came to this country at the age of nine. He began his own business in 1932, and it blossomed into the famous Barbo's Furniture Store in Stoneham, Massachusetts.

I was born in the southern part of Italy in the early 1900's. At the age of seven, my father, who had gone to America alone, thought it best to get a small part of his family here at a time and eventually, have us all here, including my mother. He made the decision and wrote to my mother asking her to send me to America first.

Remember, Andy, I said at the age of seven—that's a way back, approximately sixty-eight years ago, which isn't yesterday. It was very primitive, and especially those little small towns in the southern part of Italy, with no such thing as telephones or radio. Yes, I do remember a bus that used to come in from the capital bringing in the post office mail and other things, but that was once or twice a week, as far back as I remember. However, my mother, because of necessity, trying to keep up with her husband's wishes, reluctantly decided to send me on to America.

Well, the only way that she was able to send me, was through a guardian who had established himself in that area by escorting and chaperoning a group of children all of the way to America for a minimal fee. Of course, there were about twenty of us kids that he eventually coralled to bring to the U.S. Sure enough, this one day, I have a small valise, about two feet long, one and a half feet wide, four inches thick, with all the belongings I could possibly carry in this, and a piece of linen cloth stitched to my shirt, identifying me—my name, who my parents were, and where I had come from—in other words a "dog tag." So this one day, we started out for the U.S.

We left my little hometown, it's a very hard name to pronounce or spell, but it's pronounced "Peitra Pertia," which means "precious stone," a little village in Italy. The first stop, which took almost the best part of half a day, was on a donkey, and we came to the county town by the name of Santa dela Seta. From this county, the following day we boarded what you might call today or some years ago, a milk train, and we went to the capital of Sicily, called Palermo, which is a seaport. Well, that took practically all of the following day, although the distance was only seventy-five to eighty miles but stops at every little corner store, you might say. Well,we got to Palermo and there we were met by many other youngsters, more or less of my age, who were adventuring the same experience I was. We stayed in Palermo for two days in one of the small hotels and we finally boarded a ferry boat that came back and forth from Naples to Palermo. That was an overnight trip. We finally got to Naples and they put us up in another hotel, and from that hotel I could see this huge, enormous ship—at least it appeared to me that it was enormous because of my age. That probably today is nothing more than a good-size rowboat. However, it impressed me as though it was just a giant.We could see it from the hotel room and everybody vaid, "That's what we are going to America with! This is what we will be traveling on!"

Well, one or two days later we were ready to depart, and we were all enthusiastic, because they had treated us right well, especially the guardian. He saw to it that we had every imaginable service that we could be entitled to, plus, realizing that we were all youngsters, he had to be more or less both a father and a mother to us.

Well, now, from the hotel we could see people boarding in by the hundreds, all kinds of merchandise going on and we're now thinking we're next, but all of a sudden we hear this huge whistle from the boat which was the whistle for parting, but we didn't know the difference, and the boat started to move away and we were still in the hotel. We were all more or less wondering how come we're not on it—the boat's leaving, maybe it will come back for us. We had no explanation whatsoever. Well, to make a long story short, the boat never came back. We were left behind and we were then told that the guardian, who was responsible for us—for the crossing of the ocean from Naples to America—had become ill suddenly.

Because of the fact that he was unable to travel, the steamship captain would not accept us on board without any supervision. We were too young! Well, you can imagine the disappointment. It was all over, and we had traveled for almost eight to ten days from the little town we had come from, which was an enormous distance in our minds, but in reality, was a very short distance. So we were finally taken back and it took just as long to get back to our little town as it did to come over.

I arrived in my little town, Pietra Pertia, which was built on the side of a hill, like most towns are in Italy, very, very little flat land to build, or what flat land there is, was used in those days for cultivating purposes, which was the only means for getting food. We lived on the side of the hill and right near my home was a small little Catholic church, named St. Rocco. Of course, my mother, having parted with her oldest son, was brokenhearted. She had to do this because of necessity, but that didn't take away the anxiety that she had for parting with me. So, here she is,

going to church every day, praying that I'd get to America safe and sound, and that, hopefully some day, we would have enough money for my father to call her over. She's coming up the street to go to this church, and here I am going down the street, to get home. She knows nothing about me returning because there was no communication, none whatsoever. You couldn't send a telegram, there was no such thing as a telegram, there was no telephone, God knows there was none. As I'm approaching her she isn't sure whether she's seeing me or whether it's just a dream she's having. I see her clearly, and I'm running to her. Well, when she got to me, naturally she embraces me and she realized I'm in her arms, and she just faded away, almost dead, you might say. Now, she's on the ground and I'm on top of her, trying to revive her, rubbing her face and hollering my head off, wondering what has happened to her. Naturally, I'm screaming so much the neighbors thought it was a kids' fight and they all came to the windows to look. They see me on top of this woman and they don't know what has happened, well, finally they all come out and revive her with cold vinegar, which was what they used in those days for fainting purposes. Sure enough, she came to and we went home. I can hear her now saying she would never, never again part with me. Two years went by, and finally my father had earned enough money to call for us. My mother had three children: me, my brother Charles, and my brother John. So, the four of us finally make the crossing together. We arrived in New York on December 9, 1912.

DOG TONGUE PATCH

Emphasizing the unique cadences and phrases of spoken English, Denise Moorehead, an instructor at Roxbury Community College, had students use oral history interviews they conducted as the basis for writing and delivering speeches. Students in her introductory speech class were assigned to interview an older person they knew. They then created either a third-person narrative or first-person account based on the episode they found most interesting. The following dramatic monologue was created by Wakeela (Jo) Boston, based on an interview with her father, Alago Adegbalola. He recalls boyhood experiences on his grandparents' farm in the South.

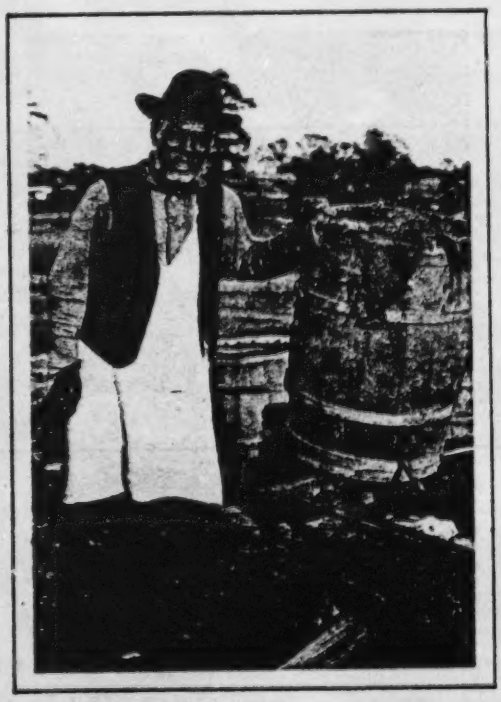
Alago Adegbalola
Interviewer: Wakeela (Jo) Boston

We had a small farm with a little garden, and the only people on it was my grandmother and myself. My grandfather was on it too, but he was an invalid—he had rheumatism. I guess all the bad luck I had, he put on me. Cause I used to do things to him and run, and he'd say, "Boy, you ain't gonna have no luck." He'd try to catch me and I'd just stand right out of his reach—poor fellow. He had this cane and he'd be coming around, trying to hit me with it.

When I went down south, that was a beautiful experience, because right now, I remember almost everything I did, it is just as clear in my mind as if it were yesterday. I mean the life I lived down there, I lived that life for about seven years. I went down south when I was about six and came back to New York when I was thirteen. I remember we used to go in to the woods to pick what we called dog tongue or deer tongue. It's a thing they made cheap tobacco out of, and all the blacks used to go into the woods and gather it. It grew wild. And when you found a dog tongue patch, you wouldn't let nobody follow you to it. You pick all the grass and stuff out of it, then rake the yard and spread it out in the yard to dry. Then after you dry it, you gather it up and bag it, and take it about five miles to town. We used to carry it on our heads in big bags—purple sacks. They'd pay you whatever the wages was going, sometimes up to twelve cents a pound, and we got money that way. It was almost like a holiday to be able to get away from the place; to go to town.

But the big thrill is Friday. After I rake the yard, scrub the kitchen floor, and scrub the back porch, Mamma would trick me—she'd make me think I was doing a big thing. She'd say, "If you get all done, we go crabbing this afternoon." Of course, that meant I didn't have to do no field work or nothing else, like cutting wood, but I had to do the yard and scrub the back porch. And I scrubbed that porch until that wood was shining, and raked that yard till there wasn't ere leaf nowhere. And then we went crabbing. Crabbing is very restful. Crabs are stupid because you take any ole thing, put it on a string and throw it over there, and they be fiddling with it and you pull the line in steady and they'd follow right up to the boat, and you take a net and just scoop them right up.

My grandfather was pure African. Black as my boot, but he had fine features, not Caucasian, but his bones were very fine. I could imagine that he might have been somebody in a tribe. What got him, was working for them crackers in them shrimp boats. They'd send Africans out there in them boats, and the weather was bad, and they stayed wet all the time and all that. His joints were all stiff from working for years in them shrimp boats. He had two families. One family all died from yellow jaundice and they buried them all out in the field back there in their own private grave yard, and the farm was all around it. Then he married my grandmother and had another family.



My grandmother, boy, you talk about child abuse? They ain't even abusing nobody now. They'd whip your buns, whip your buns; and the worse part, my grandmother used to send me out there to get the switches. She'd say, "You go out there and get a switch and peel it." And I'd go out there and get switches. Then I got hip. I'd go and get them old brittle switches. My grandmother got so that she wouldn't send me for the switch no more. She started getting those peach switches and they don't ever wear out. They frazzle, and the more they frazzle, the worse they are because then they wrap around you, and I had whelps. And my grandfather used to come and, what we called "beg" for me. Sometimes. When I know I did something and my grandfather, when he came home, I'd say, "Pop, you gonna beg for me?" And he'd say, "No, I ain't gonna beg for you, you scoundrel you." He knew what to call me. He'd say, "I'll get you when you go to bed, you scoundrel you."

BEGINNINGS

When used as a way for students to find out more about themselves, their families, and each other, oral history is an effective way of creating a strong sense of community within a classroom.

Barbara Lipke, a sixth grade teacher at the Runkle School in Brookline, began the school year with an oral history unit which she says "turned out to be the key to my annual puzzle of how to make twenty-five individuals into an involved, caring class. It succeeded, not only in accomplishing that goal, but also in giving the students many new skills. In addition, it gave me an abundance of information about every child's language arts skills (e.g. spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, note-taking, question-asking)."

After being introduced to the idea of oral history, the children prepared to interview each other by brainstorming and evaluating questions in terms of which ones might evoke interesting, detailed responses. Questions were focused on finding out something unique about each person (e.g. "What was the scariest/funniest/saddest/most exciting thing that ever happened to you?"). Every child had the opportunity to be interviewer, interviewee, and scribe. Based on the notes they had taken, students then created projects about each other.

Presentation of the student projects turned out to be an important step in the process of building relationships between the participants. The finished products, which the authors had taken time and care to produce, were greatly valued by those interviewed. Sharing these projects, which included poems, comic strips, news stories, and, fictional memoirs, meant that the children, even those who had been together for the full six years of elementary school, learned new things about each other, and those students who were new to the school became more easily integrated into the class.

Children then moved on to interview their oldest family members or neighbors. In one instance a boy interviewed his father who told of a narrow escape he had during World War II; direct quotations from the father's story lent authenticity and suspense to the student's written version of the tale. In another, a girl asked her mother about her childhood and learned that she had been just as mischievous as the child herself tended to be; the mother's tales of childish scheming resulted in a lively written narrative. Again, finished products were presented to the people interviewed who valued them greatly. Parents, grandparents, and neighbors had a sense of becoming part of the school, and were pleased to see their histories used as a basis for learning.

FOCUS ON AGING

1.SUMMER ROSES

Who: seventh and eighth graders
Unique feature: making an extended commitment to a nursing home

2. REFLECTIONS AND RECOLLECTIONS

Who: eighth graders
Unique feature: juxtaposing students' perceptions and feelings with biographies of subjects

3. BLISSFUL BEETHOVEN

Who: third graders
Unique feature: using art to heighten students' awareness of their own changing perceptions of "old people"

In addition to learning *from* older adults, the three oral history projects described in the following section stress learning *about* older adults, aging, and cultural perceptions of old age.

Oral history, because it typically provides an opportunity to bring young and old together, is a means of dispelling stereotypes held by both groups. Students, isolated as they often are within a segregated "youth culture," are frequently deprived of a sense of the continuity and stability of human and cultural values so essential in this rapidly changing world. Traditionally, it is the old who have assumed a key role in transmitting those inherited values and attitudes within which identity develops, but increasingly, many children never have the chance to relate to a grandparent generation. Oral history represents a means of reaffirming the links between generations.

There are obvious rewards for older adults involved in the intergenerational experience as well. It is essential that older adults, confronted as they are by many severe losses, have the chance to participate in activities that give their lives a sense of continuity. It is important that they be able to perform activities consistent with what they have been doing all their lives, such as educating children. The sense of having something of value to pass on to people is a powerful weapon with which to combat loss and isolation. To be needed, to have a concrete sense of self, to be a contributing member of the community— these are things we all need in order to have a sense of personal and social worth, but they are things often denied the elderly. Oral history projects can provide older adults with real-life situations through which to interact with the world around them.

SUMMER ROSES

The following article describes a project that grew out of VOICES' activities in Brookline, where eight elementary and middle school classroom teachers were paired with representatives of elder care facilities within walking distance of their schools. In a series of seminars, this group learned about oral history techniques and then collaboratively planned the details of a variety of projects bringing young and old together.

This effort required the cooperation of many institutions, including the Brookline Multi-Service Senior Center and the Brookline Council on Aging, as well as key personnel within the Brookline Public Schools.

Brookline Superintendent, Dr. Robert Sperber, explains his support of intergenerational programs: "Given that Brookline has one of the nation's largest senior citizen populations, with twenty percent of its citizens over sixty-five, it is vital that public schools not only provide services to these seniors, but also demonstrate that they are important to the success of our student population. Additionally, since many of our children do not live near their own grandparents, it is natural that the school system have as one of its objectives the fostering of intergenerational programs.

"From an instructional point of view, oral history is an effective technique for teachers in a school system where great emphasis is placed on differentiated education. It can help teachers address the needs of children of a wide range of ability, from the child who has difficulties learning to the one who is gifted academically."

From the beginning, Dr. Sperber sought means of perpetuating the oral history program: "The success of our intergenerational program has depended on establishing institutional structures which will enable programs to function after the pilot stage. This approach has worked effectively in Brookline for the hot lunch program offered to senior citizens in two of our elementary schools, for our adult education programs which are offered in the daytime in various senior residences, and for our School Volunteers Program which brings the talents and services of senior citizens into our elementary and high school classrooms, offices, and libraries. For this reason, I encouraged VOICES to approach our director of School Volunteers to work out arrangements for the program to function under her administrative direction. For this same reason, I suggested that the scope of the project be presented to the Brookline Elementary Principals' Association in order to obtain their understanding and support."

In *SUMMER ROSES*, Brookline teacher Lisa Hirsh details many aspects of an experience involving her class and residents of a local nursing home:

School had been out a week and it had been a steamy day, but the evening cooled down and the roses were in full bloom. It was a perfect time for our dinner with Ada. Ada was born ninety-four years ago. She resides in the Brookline nursing home that my sixth and seventh graders visited weekly last spring. Our visits to the home were preceded by various activities designed to heighten awareness of different perceptions of old age.

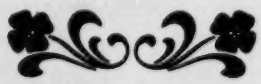
We saw a film called *The Shopping Bag Lady*, which poignantly portrays the life of an old woman living in Central Park. In the story a group of teen-age girls meets the "shopping bag lady" in the park and makes fun of her. Eventually one of the girls finds an old photographic album which belongs to the woman, and discovers a picture of the woman when she was fourteen. The young girl is touched by the photograph. She begins a slow process of looking beyond the shopping bag lady's exterior, and tries to feel what her life has been like.

We spent a good deal of time talking about the movie, after which everyone wrote, telling the story from the point of view of the shopping bag lady. We read these compositions in class, often several times, and commented on them, looking for those pieces of writing which had tried to get inside the feelings of the older woman.

"This is the worst assignment you have given all year," one student said after the second draft.
"Worst or hardest?" I asked.
"Hardest, I guess. I mean, I just can't imagine what it's really like to be old. I feel that what I am writing is fake." I had also done the assignment and it *was* hard. I knew what the student meant. But clearly it seemed important to try to deeply imagine the feelings of someone older before going to the nursing home.

In the following weeks we began to talk and write about older people who were important in our lives. As we wrote these "portraits," we shared them with the class. In addition to the compositions, the children started journals in which they recorded the visits to the home and ideas of projects they would like to do with the residents.

Through an attitude survey we examined our own stereotypes of older people and then we looked at images of the elderly portrayed by the media. Children made a display contrasting writing and advertisements that were free of stereotypes with those that were not. To further balance the picture, I introduced books stressing the accomplishments of older people.



The children planned our first visit to the nursing home. They decided to bring punch and cookies, wear name tags which they had made, and bring one or two questions they could ask an older person. We made no attempt to pair people up. We sat in a circle and introduced ourselves. The children told their ages and one thing they liked to do, while the older people generally said where they were from. After the "official" time was up, those children who had to go home did. Many stayed and talked, and afterwards we walked home together.

Those walks became an important time. As we unwound from the schoc! day, we talked easily and frankly about how the visits had gone, what was special, and what had been hard or awkward. I felt so pleased with the way the children had been that first day, that I took the remaining ones for an ice cream on their way back to school. That became a tradition: we stopped at the ice cream parlor each time on the way home, and gradually different children began to treat the group. We never knew what would happen on any given visit, but somehow the walks there and back, with the stop at the ice cream parlor, cemented the group feeling that we were all in this together.

It is difficult to d:scribe this feeling, but it was an important development. Perhaps it was a combination of growth in generosity and growth in social skills. For instance, I saw a change in children who had initially come into the meeting room and stood off to the side. As the project progressed some of these same children would come into the room, look around to see who wasn't being talked to, and go up to that person. This was difficult to do.

After several visits I had asked the children to design two projects: an active one they could do with an older person and a written one. In discussing the kinds of active projects they might do, I suggested that they involve a real exchange, such as learning how to knit, working on a stamp collection, building a birdhouse, planting flowers together for the home. The written projects could take one of many forms, ranging from fiction to non-fiction.

Ideas were many. It was baseball season and three boys decided they would play baseball with residents Bob and Benny. Larissa would ask Ada to teach her to crochet, Sylvia and Claudia would do string sculpture with Eva. Tammy brought paints to paint with Lona, Geoffrey made a cribbage board to play with Harold. The written projects, most of which were biographical, included finding out from Ada what farm life was like in Massachusetts at the turn of the century, interviewing Mary to find out what she thought of nursing home life, and doing a character sketch of Harold.

That was what we did, the rhythm of these short weeks. When I think back on the project, a series of vignettes comes to mind. They are almost like photographs and are often fragments of conversations.

Patrick asking if he could leave school a few minutes early to buy ice cream for Ceilia, a spirited eighty-four year old resident.

Eleven year-old Tammy brimming with excitement, "I had a terrific day with Rose," Rose who rarely speaks, and when she does, only in monosyllables.
"How did you get started?" I heard Claire ask Tammy. "I tried for half an hour and she would not speak to me," said Claire.
"Oh, it was easy," replied Tammy. "I just asked her who her favorite football player was."
"You what?!" Claire was incredulous. So was I. Rose has a vacant stare. It was hard to imagine her responding to a question about football.
"How did you get the idea to ask her that?" I said, trying to be casual.
"Oh, everyone likes football—it's a natural."
Later I read in Claire's journal: "You know what I learned today? That two people can be in the same situation and see it totally differently. Tammy and I are both working with Rose. I feel like she never talks to me, and Tammy always comes home elated. Today I stayed in the same room, just to see how Tammy got started. She had almost the same experience as I always do, but she just feels differently about it. Every small response she gets, she feels terrific."

Joey and Timmy deciding it was too hot to go to the home, even though they had promised Benny they would be there. When I arrived at the home and Benny saw that the boys were not with me, he looked completely downcast and went off into a corner. Even though it was after school I called Timmy. "Gee, I didn't know Benny was counting on me, " he said. Forty minutes later in the strong heat of the day as we walked home, we met Timmy puffing up the hill on his bike towards the home.

The next day Timmy and Joey came to school with two large post cards of Fenway Park to send to Benny, and a red baseball hat they had bought for him.

Two kids coming into school on Monday exhausted from a weekend hike. They could barely keep their eyes open. "Boy, we hiked for a whole day," one of them said, yawning.

We had a guest that day, seventy-five year-old Lois Harris from the Gray Panthers, who said brightly as she entered the room, "It's wonderful to be here. I've just come back from a week in the mountains with the Appalachian Mountain Club." The two hikers sat up suddenly. "A week?! Gosh."

Lois Harris' visit was a high point. Each child had prepared several questions for Ms. Harris about the Gray Panthers and her reasons for joining the organization. When the planned questions were over, there was a pause and one of the older boys spoke hesitantly, "I don't know how to put this exactly, and maybe it's not right for me to ask, but when did you first feel old?"

Ms. Harris stopped and smiled directly at him. "Well, I know what you mean, and perhaps it sounds a bit silly, but I don't feel old. Of course there are the physical things one notices, my hair is thinner, and I can't quite climb those 4,000 foot peaks as easily as I used to—and I know that I am what people call old. I just don't feel old. Do you know what I mean?"

Bobby nodded slowly and grinned, "Yeah, I know what you mean."

So many small moments. There is almost no way to convey the tenderness and strength of the children and the older people. There was Tammy's hand supporting Lona as she walked, Bobby throwing the baseball just right to Bob, Cheryl staying late and bringing fudge to Mary, Harold telling Billy about fishing, Eva praising Sylvia and Claudia for their biography of her, and four kids crowding into Sarah's room and sitting on her bed, talking about traveling on ocean liners and laughing. Beyond all the words, the exchanged glances, the laughter.

During the last week of school the students went to the nursing home for their final visit. As they had brought the refreshments the first day, the residents of the home wanted to provide them the last day. The children brought their written work to read to the people about whom they had written. Some made photo copies so they could give a copy away and keep one for themselves. Finally Harold stood up and thanked the children for coming. He said, "There have been a lot of people who come here, but you have been special. You didn't just play games with us, you really talked with us, and that has been wonderful."

One day, as summer aproached and we were leaving the home, we passed Ada sitting by the door in her wheelchair. She had had a bad day and felt ill and dispirited. "I get so tired of being cooped up here. I want to get out," she snapped.

Larissa, who had been interviewing her, and I said, "How would you like to go out to dinner in a couple of weeks?"

"A couple of weeks? I don't know if I'll still be around."

That couple of weeks had passed and now as we climbed the familiar hill to the nursing home, I thought of Ada. We would soon be coming down wheeling the wheelchair and I wondered how fast it would go, and whether it would be difficult to control.

Ada was sitting in the foyer, all ready, in a pink sweater and matching earrings and lace blouse. "I've been dressed since noon, and the thought of this kept me going all day," she greeted me. "You look beautiful Ada," we said. And she did.

Larissa and I had decided to take Ada to a nearby vegetarian restaurant. We had heard it had wonderful food, was very homey, and equally important to us, had a ramp for the wheelchair. In one swift half-hour of manuevering a very light woman in a small wheelchair we learned more than we had in all of our reading about how important it is to have lower curbs at the corners of sidewalks for carriages and wheelchairs!

Ada was pleased with the journey, we could tell. She joked and told stories all the way down the hill. As we entered the restaurant, Larissa said, "What's your favorite food, Ada?"
"Oh, steak and lobster," Ada said lightly.

Larissa and I exchanged glances. The menu was on the blackboard a good distance from our table. It suddenly seemed very strange, with entrees like stuffed broccoli and marinated eggplant. We struggled to find something that would feel like steak or lobster. Ada is a chain smoker and the polite signs near the plants asked people not to smoke. We waited warily.

"Would you like a small salad?" I asked Ada.
"Sure," Ada replied, and moments later a huge mound of lettuce and tomatoes arrived, covered with alfalfa sprouts. Waiting a moment and glancing with a grin at Larissa, she said, "What's this, feathers?" We laughed. It was going to be fine. The food was only incidental.

All the way home Ada talked about her life, about bicycling with her son, about things she liked to cook, and about why she thought a woman's place was in the home.

Larissa turned to her and said, "Ada, I wore a skirt especially for you. I remembered that you said you thought girls should look like girls."

"Well they should," Ada replied shortly.

On the last leg of the hill we took a back road stopping to admire all the gardens along the way. We picked a small fragrant white flower from a hedge and Ada tucked it in her sweater. "I've taught them everything about plants at the home," she said, "and will you smell those roses!" And it was true, it was a night for roses.

REFLECTIONS - RECOLLECTIONS

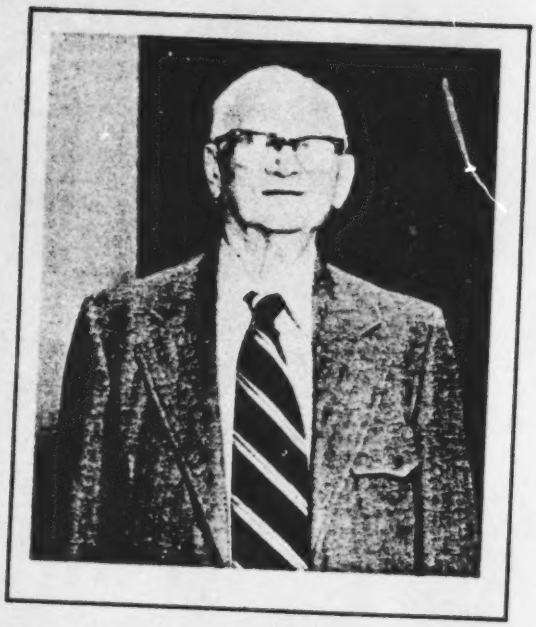
School Volunteers of Boston's intergenerational project, directed by Eleanor Swartz, pairs classes in the Boston Public Schools with local long-term care facilities for older adults, and then trains students and teachers to conduct oral history interviews. *Reflections - Recollections*, a booklet of biographies based on interviews, is the result of the cooperation of two groups, The Thomas A. Edison Middle School and the Hebrew Rehabilitation Center, brought together by School Volunteers.

At an initial social gathering, eighth graders and residents talked informally. Subsequently, the students returned for four interviews with the same person, meeting as a group after each session to evaluate and write-up or transcribe their notes or tapes. In the final edited biography, each student highlighted one aspect of the interviewee's life that was interesting historically or personally.

Elizabeth Feldman, the teacher responsible for *Reflections - Recollections*, sums up the impact of the project: "We have discovered that chronological age is not as important as one's attitude toward life—being productive, being positive, and looking forward to tomorrow...We have learned that there is no generation gap, only a bridge that one must be willing to cross."

The impact on the students is reflected in their own words: "It isn't everyday that you can sit down with a person that lived through World War I and can tell you what it was like back then." "You get to find out what kind of life they lived and to find out how life was before we were even born." "We found out things about the past they don't put in history books." "I had a nice friend that I interviewed...He speaks what he feels and we both communicated very well...You can share your thoughts and feelings with people like him."

The format of *Reflections - Recollections* is appealing, particularly if one is interested in both process and historical content, because it relates the feelings of the interviewers toward the experience. The interviews themselves were written up as biographies, only occasionally making use of direct quotations, an ideal format for those who do not have access to tape recorders.



.. FEELINGS ..

Craig and I interviewed Mr. Emmanuel Cooks. He told us some interesting stories about his life. Mr. Cooks is an active man and a very nice person. We enjoyed having the opportunity to go the Hebrew Rehabilitation Center and have this experience.

Demetric Cooper

.. FEELINGS ..

When Demetric and I went to the Center, we thought it was going to be a drag with people in wheel chairs or ill. When we got there it was so different. The people there didn't seem old. They were active just like me.

Craig Williams

EMMANUEL COOKS:

WORLD WAR I

Emmanuel Cooks was born in South Boston on May 2, 1895. He attended the Mary Hemmingway Grammar School and graduated Boys' Latin in 1913. He went on to college at Northeastern to become a lawyer. When the United States declared war he immediately went to City Hall to enlist at 5:30 A.M. and was the first one in line. Mr. Cooks' draft card number was number one. He was rejected at first because he was underweight, but he gained weight rapidly and entered the army. His mother gave him a surprise party before he left. During the party the sheriff came for him and told him to report to draft headquarters. When he got there he found that his friend Eli Adlow, later to become a well-known judge, had played a joke on him.

Mr. Cooks was first sent to Kelley Field, but there were no uniforms or equipment. He got his uniform and basic training in New York. He recalled that every day six thousand German prisoners passed his barracks for a work detail to repair roads. In those days, every soldier was given a pouch of Durham tobacco and the papers to roll their own cigarettes. Mr. Cooks noticed that the staff sergeant was passing messages to the prisoners in the tobacco ration. The sergeant was caught and, although Mr. Cooks never saw him again, he felt he was a member of the German underground.

Mr. Cooks' first historical recollection was of troops going into Mexico looking for Pancho Villa. He also remembered Teddy Roosevelt and the battle of San Juan Hill. The first time he was old enough to vote, he voted for Woodrow Wilson for president.

It was very exciting to talk to someone who remembered the people and places that we are studying in our social studies class. We hope we will have the opportunity to talk with Mr. Cooks again about some more living history.

Craig Williams
and
Demetric Cooper

BLISSFUL BEETHOVEN

Even third graders can do oral history. Marcy Prager's class at the Baker School in Brookline studies the city-past, present,and future. Last year Marcy expanded the city unit to take advantage of living resources in her community-older adults who could reflect upon changes witnessed in seventy years of urban life. She built the program around biweekly walks to a public library which ran a senior citizen movie program. As a result, the children gained in knowledge as well as appreciation and understanding of older people.

As a correlary to this project, Marcy felt it was important to talk with the children about their perceptions of "old people" and then to see if, at the end of the project, any of those perceptions had changed. As a means of doing this she devised a project with the art teacher in which the children were asked to make four drawings that ended four sentences: 1) Elderly people are happy when ...2) Elderly people are sad when...3) Elderly people find it easy to...4) Elderly people find it difficult to...

In general, the "before" pictures tended to portray the elderly as limited-sick, crabby, not interested in children; whereas the "after" pictures incorporated some of the new and surprising information the children had learned-most old people enjoy making friends and being involved as much as anyone else, while some eighty year-olds even love to disco. There was another new insight, one which is at the heart of such programs. "Old people are sad when children don't come."

The students' preparation for this first venture into oral history was twofold: continuing investigation into various aspects of the city, and practice in formulating and asking questions through activities focusing on family history and biography. After discussing as a group what would be good "getting to know you" questions-things you'd want to know about someone at first meeting—the children each created fifteen questions and interviewed a person of their choice-parent, relative, or friend. They wrote a short biography of the person based on the interview.

"My Father's Biography"
by Jennifer Geracht

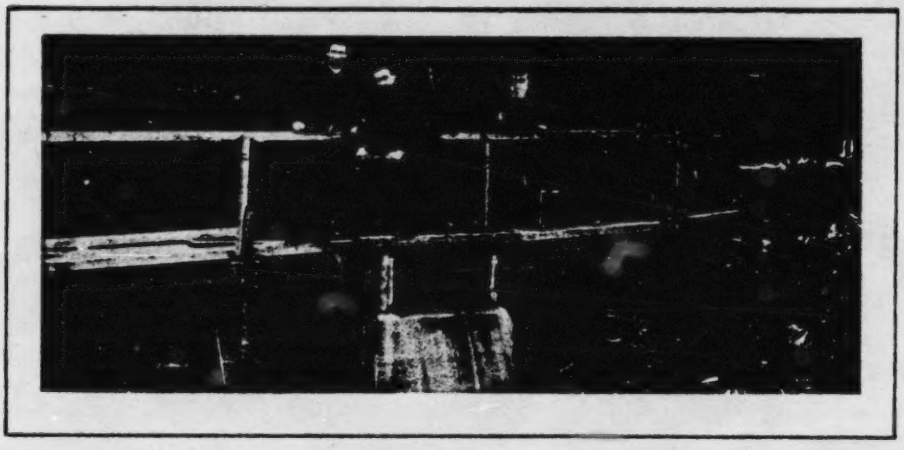
My father, Maurice A. Geracht, is a hard working man. He is a college professor at Holy Cross. Right now he is writing an outline for a book, *James Fenimore Cooper.*

Two years ago he had to do some research in Europe. We went to some places like Germany and Switzerland and other places I can't remember.

He liked traveling because he was born in Paris, France, and brought up in the French Alps. He liked it there because it was beautiful and he had his own goat herd.

His life was part happy and part sad. His father was brought up in Amsterdam, Holland, and his mother came from Poland, but they got shot by Adolf Hitler and he and his sister Estelle were left without a family and they said, "The youngest should have the birthday first." And my father had to give his birthday to Estelle and now we celebrate my father's birthday on Estelle's.

They left that place and went to their aunt's house and they didn't like it there. My father worked at the age of eight! Estelle moved out at the age of fifteen and came to the U.S.A. and so did my father. He came to America to start a better life.



Having completed this phase, the children were now ready to anticipate interviews with strangers. They knew that their end product (after a series of four interviews) would be a written biography of their subject. The first chapter would be a general introduction to the person's life, similar to the biographies they had already written. The second chapter was to have as its focus the city, and the third chapter was to be based on an incident, event, or period in the person's life that the child wanted to know more about. It was an opportunity to follow-up, in detail, something only touched upon in an earlier interview.

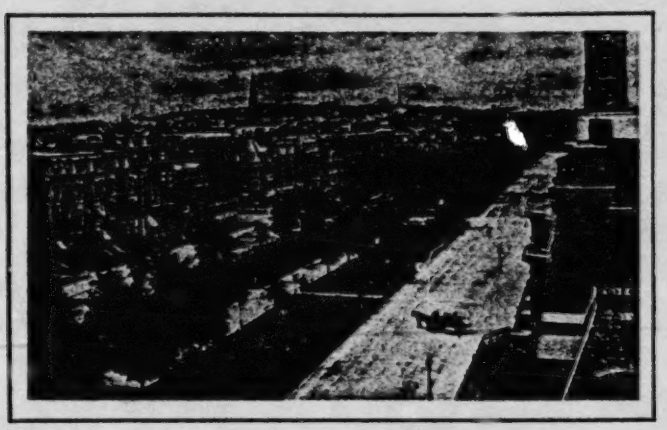
Preparation for each session (the children interviewed in groups of four) consisted of brainstorming as a class appropriate categories and types of questions, then reaching consensus on wording. By the final interview, children were already moving spontaneously to follow-up on information with unplanned questions. Marcy reinforced this tendency by introducing them to the concept of "building a ladder" (relating their questions to the response of the subject). She did this by writing a single question on the board and then asking them what different directions could result from that starting point.

Initially reserved, young and old quickly warmed to each other. Marcy felt that the older people, who perhaps had not related to children in a long time, had not anticipated the brightness of the eight year-olds. Both groups took their commitment to each other seriously. One of the most deeply felt insights of the first meeting came in the group where the person being interviewed announced, "Today is my birthday. I'm eighty-two years old." Suddenly, one of the little boys in the group comprehended that enormous span of time in his own terms. He realized that the man sitting in front of him was as old as the 1897 Sears Roebuck catalogue that he had just studied. It make a profound impression on him. Another year, Marcy will have the seniors and children look at the catalogue together as a concrete starting place to inspire reminiscences.

Over the weeks, children and older people became friends. One girl made regular phone calls to the person she had interviewed. Among the children a little competition developed as to whose friend was the oldest or had the most interesting stories to tell: "Mine's older!" "Mine escaped from Russia!" The experience affected the elders as well. One woman had been a recluse since the death of her husband three months before, but her commitment to the children brought her back out into the world.

For the last session, the older people came to visit the school. The children had each written a thank-you note in which they mentioned something very particular they had learned or enjoyed. The elders read them aloud as the children watched. The final event of the day, in Marcy's words, "was a little girl sharing her report on Beethoven. She compared one event in his life with a particular piece that he created which she played on the piano. One elderly person confessed that he had been a concert pianist, and with loud clapping, the children convinced him to play ten minutes of blissful Beethoven! The children were in awe!"

FOCUS ON A COMMUNITY

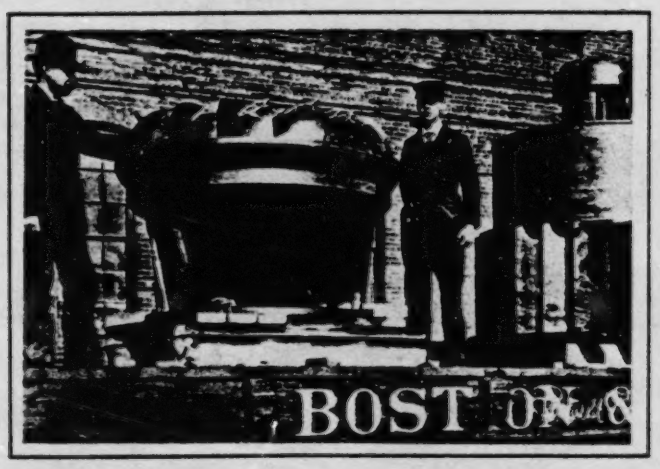


1. FETTUCINE AND FOOTSCRAPERS

Who: high school students
Unique feature: contrasting two communities through social history

2. STRAWBERRIES AND STREETCARS

Who: high school students and fifth graders
Unique feature: using the resources of an historical society



3. TAKING CARE OF THEIR HERITAGE

Who: high school students
Unique feature: looking at historical events from a regional perspective

Oral history as a means of recording the past of a community is becoming an increasingly popular adjunct to traditional local archives. The three oral history projects in this section all deal with local history but have slightly differing emphases: one contrasts the past and present of two communities, another offers oral history as a balance to the more usual history of the town's famous people, while the third often gives a local perspective on historical events in the larger world.

These articles also illustrate one of the most interesting and potentially educational aspects of oral history-that perceptions of how things are, or in this case, how things were, depend on your vantage point. Every person being interviewed has a unique perspective, a context, from which events are perceived. This allows student interviewers not only to hear different sides of historical issues, but also to raise questions of subjectivity, interpretation, and cultural bias as they affect the history we read in our textbooks.

FETTUCINE AND FOOTSCRAPERS

Oral history, when combined with research into other primary and secondary sources, can enrich and personalize the study of a community. In the case of a group of Newton North High School students who were part of the Boston Project, the communities under study were not their own. The project, an alternative learning experience made available to second semester seniors, involved them in intensive study of the North End and Beacon Hill, and culminated in the writing of *Fettucine and Footscrapers*, a social history contrasting the two neighborhoods. Ernest Wight, director of the Boston Project, hopes that because of their work, students' fears and stereotypes will be dispelled, and greater appreciation and fuller use of the city will result. He describes the project:

The idea of creating a book seemed attractive to the kids. Perhaps the writing of a book represented an opportunity for the students to see a direct relationship between their investment and a tangible product.

The kids frequently expressed eagerness to get going on the book. However, it became apparent to us that we needed to spend some time conceptualizing the book, getting organized, and developing the skills necessary for the successful launching of the project. After much discussion, we decided to produce a booklet that could be used by school groups to help in the study of Boston. We specifically designed it to be part of the city unit in the sophomore Individual and Society course at Newton North High School. We also intended to have it serve both as a guide book and as a portrait of the social qualities of Beacon Hill and the North End as presented by the people who live and work in the two neighborhoods.

We organized the students into three groups: an editorial board, a North End team, and a Beacon Hill team. Each team had the responsibility of preparing, conducting, taping, and transcribing the interviews within its neighborhood. This was long, hard work, and took from four to six weeks to accomplish. The team coordinators and the editorial board met periodically to assess progress, to reaffirm roles and responsibilities, and to keep us on our course. Once the interviews had been transcribed, the editorial board read them and derived a list of topics that emerged from the mass of material. The editorial board's idea for doing this provided a solution to the problem of how we were to use the interviews in the book. The members of each team were then assigned the task of writing something on the topics that had emerged from interviews, and that would lead logically into direct quotes from the material. Those students who had not been directly involved with interviewing had the responsibility for researching and writing background material, and developing the directories and bibliography.

We were fortunate to have found a firm which was conducting a CETA training program, and offered to typeset the book free of charge. When we got the material back from the typesetter, several students came to the high school's graphic arts department to do the layout work, and prepare the material for the printer.

I am thoroughly convinced that a project, such as the production of this book, has enormous educational value in providing the kinds of experiences that I, as a teacher, am always trying to make possible for my students. Students' energies are focused on a valued goal; organizational structure and individual accountability become necessary to complete the task; the achievement of the goal is a source of individual and group pride. The kind of commitment and the depth of commitment students made to the project were heartening. They wanted to make the book as good as they could because their names would be on it.

The following portions of *Fettucine and Footscrapers* illustrate how segments of interviews can be embedded within a narrative to lend color, feeling, and evidence to an expository document.

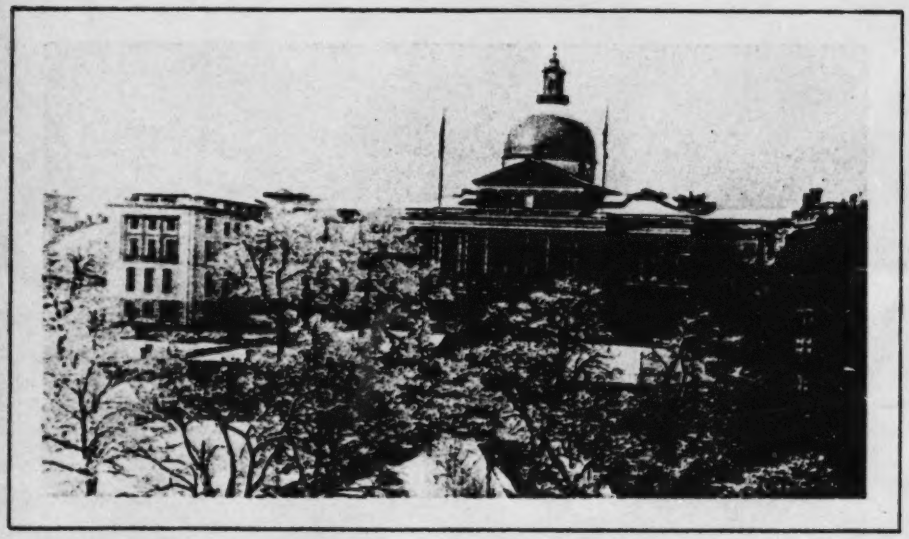
NORTH END BACKGROUND

The Italians also faced discrimination in other quarters and were labeled like other immigrants, as "lazy" and "shiftless." In addition, they were forced to deal with squalid, overcrowed, insanitary conditions. A North End resident whose parents came over at this time stated, "Our poor mothers and fathers didn't find gold (in America), they found depression." People still remember this time when in the North End "everybody was one big happy family. We were all the same. Twelve dollars a week, all the families, and we all lived on it. And we were happy...I mean we were all friendly. We ate together, we danced together. All the doors were open in the houses." The first thing these families tried to do was to buy the house in which they lived. They also formed many social clubs and mutual aid societies which held feasts in honor of their patron saints. Soon people outside the North End tried to alleviate the problems of the North End. For this reason, the North Bennet Street Industrial School (the first of its kind in the United States) was started. The Italians soon began to regard the North End as their home mainly because all their families were there. At one point, 90% of the North End was Italian. Finally, considering the North End as their home, they began to take care of the area. When

urban renewal plans were made in 1959, the citizens banded together to oppose them and save the integrity of their neighborhood. The North End resident stated, "After they made their money they moved out of Boston 'cause they wanted a bath and the conveniences...and a backyard and a porch." The people tried to remedy this by making the North End a nice place to live. One of their big projects involved youth facilities. The North End had a low crime rate anyway but now the incidence of juvenile delinquency went down. This was a time when juvenile delinquency was on the rise everywhere else. For the Italians of the North End, the 1950's was a time of growth. It was marred only by the building of the central artery which they never were sufficiently organized to oppose. Through the efforts of these people the North End has become a pleasant place to live.

BEACON HILL TRADITIONS

Traditions are transmitted from generation to generation and consequently become intrinsic influences in the beliefs, attitudes, and lifestyles of society. The father has traditionally been head of the household, people have traditionally assigned too much homework. Some traditions are adapted with the times, while others are disregarded for lack of appreciation or outdated by current wants or needs. On Beacon Hill, although some traditions are conducted privately in homes, others are shared within the community.



"One of the first things I liked about coming to Boston, which was an old Beacon Hill tradition, was to come down for Christmas carols on Christmas Eve. It used to be a lovely time. Oh, I suppose it was before people started getting frightened about what went on all around the world and kept their houses open nights. A lot of people would go around from house to house and sing Christmas carols. It was beautiful and on a snowy night it was a lovely scene. Most of the nice townhouses had green Christmas trees inside, with people standing by the windows listening to the carollers sing; very often, even if you didn't know them, they would invite you to come in and have a glass of punch or something."

"On Christmas Eve people gathered in Louisburg Square for the bell ringing ceremonies. Hundreds of people would gather. They finally had to stop having them because the crowds got out of hand. It's a shame. It really was quite lovely."

IN THE DAYS OF STRAWBERRIES AND STREETCARS

The Concord Historical Commission has involved elementary and senior high school students in the commission's oral history project, In the Days of Strawberries and Streetcars. Renee Garrelick, coordinator of the program, describes two of its components:

Concord as an historic town is well known for its prominent national leadership during the eighteenth century and its rich literary tradition of the nineteenth century. School children are exposed at an early age to its heroes, some over the years looming larger than life. But what of Concord life for the ordinary townspeople? What of life after the Alcotts?

With the present century more than three quarters gone, the town of Concord recognized the need to preserve the memories of town life before they were irrevocably lost with the death of its older residents. In response to this need, an oral history program entitled In the Days of Strawberries and Streetcars was developed three years ago under the auspices of the Concord Historical Commission.

With the help of two teachers from Concord High School, student volunteers were selected to accompany me and participate in the interviews.

One memorable event with a student, Cindy Magee, occurred by chance. We were returning from an interview when we passed the McHugh farmhouse. I had spent many pleasurable hours hearing Terry McHugh speak of the days when the century was young. Cindy asked to stop at the farmhouse and so we impulsively drove in.

I was apprehensive about their meeting—the seventeen year-old girl wearing her usual attire of blue jeans and kerchief tied about her forehead, with the farmer past eighty whose family had tilled the same soil and lived in the same house for one hundred years.

I hesitantly made the introduction. Terry McHugh extended his hand and with an air of formality accompanied by a slight bow greeted her as, "Miss Magee." "Miss Magee" it was to remain through the entire conversation and Cindy readily accepted the status of the young woman.

Upon entering the McHugh house, the first room was the kitchen where preparations were in progress for the main noon meal. "This reminds me of my grandmother's kitchen; she was Irish, too," was Cindy's opening remark.

Terry McHugh began to tell her of the many Irish farmers who had once inhabited the section of Concord known as the East Quarter. He took her back to the era of the horse-drawn plow and hand cultivation of the soil and to the time when Concord grass meant asparagus.

Terry McHugh talked to Cindy about growing up as a boy in Concord at the turn of the century in a way that no printed curriculum materials could. I discarded my concern over dress and realized, as I saw Terry McHugh in his worn work clothes, how contrived it would have been had they appeared otherwise.

In addition to taping and collecting interviews of local residents our program is interested in making tapes available to elementary school classrooms as a supplement to their text books.

A fifth grade teacher at the Ripley School in Concord, Mrs. Katherine Rothermel, turned to the oral history program as a way of enriching her students' understanding of Concord's early twentieth century history. She wanted her students not only to learn from books and museums, but also to hear about their town's past from people whose recollections were on tape. The memories of ordinary people have a way of becoming very special. The voices on tape were not those of remote figures from the past but of people living in their midst.

As part of the In the Days of Strawberries and Streetcars program, a collection of photographs depicting those aspects of early twentieth century town life described on the tapes had been put together. I took a selection of those photographs and tape excerpts with me to the class of Concord fifth graders. I wanted the students to have the opportunity to linger over a photo and observe the detail that would not be possible through slides.

Pictures were distributed in groups according to themes: school days, farming, the boys of baseball, the 1925 celebration, the hurricane of 1938. As students looked at each group I read selected excerpts transcribed from the tapes appropriate to the photos. I told the students of a visit to our tape collection from a woman following her father's death. She felt pleased that her young children in the years to come could know their grandfather through hearing his memories. The students seemed to appreciate the value of oral history as a personal legacy. Through oral history, school and community were joined, and the very young found a better appreciation of history in their towns, an appreciation shown in thank-you notes they wrote.

Wednesday, February 28, 1979

Dear Mrs. Garrelick,

Thank you so much for coming to our classroom and showing us the pictures and telling us about them. I really enjoyed it. Since then I have been liking the Antiquarian project and all the history of Concord. I wish Main Street still had all of the Elm trees making an archway over it. I walk to the library every Tuesday after school and I am trying to find out some more about Concord in the years that have passed. I also ask my Great Grandmother, who is 87, about how it looked when she was younger. I wish you would come again.

Sincerely,
Kate Gibson grade 5
Mrs Rothermel's class
Ripley School

TAKING CARE OF THEIR HERITAGE

Taking Care of Their Heritage, Volumes I (1978) and II (1979), brings together the memories of elders who, for the most part, have lived in the Andover-Lawrence area all their lives. Their memories span eighty years and cover topics ranging from the Depression to ethnic conflict. The books were created by junior high school students in the Andover Public Schools, under the leadership of Sean Kennan, project coordinator, and Peter Anderson and Linda Marchi, editors. Sean Kennan describes the philosophy behind the project:

It was one conversation that I'll never forget. Kenneth R. Seifert, Superintendent of the Andover Public Schools, and I had met not more than twenty minutes earlier and we were swapping stories like a couple of veterans. At points it seemed like the room was alive with our heroes. And in a sense it was.

Sagas were acted out by voice and tone. The characters tiptoed, marched, danced, and sometimes jumped off the tip of our tongues. There was the New Jersey cop, the tinsmith for the Ford Motor Company, the conductor for the B&M, the retired generator operator and a host of others. All brought together with wide-eyed curiosity and memories lubricated with laughter. Heroes, saints, legends, and myths.

As loving as it was humble, the exchange carried with it a profound irony. Too many sentences were being punctuated with the words "if only": the regret of the story teller, teacher, parent, and friend. The "if onlys" in this case concerned older citizens in our past who had left their mark upon us and gone quietly and proudly along the path of invisibility into memory. They walked past us before we had the wisdom of time to say, "Wait! Please share."

We couldn't, for all of our concern, give life to the dead. We could only give voices to the living. And some whom we met this year had voices, were willing to share and eager to help. Others would talk to us in terms of having "nothing to say," and feeling "too old," and being "too dumb to talk to kids today."

Lies. And I'll bet their speakers don't even believe what they're saying. Instead, I have to believe that they're simply people trying to grow old "properly," in silence, with a progressively diminished self-image and a confused sense of belonging.

Older citizens are to this school system neither a novelty nor a cause. Instead they are persons who can provide, by thought and memory, significant linkages with the past. Knowing how it was and what seemed to work are two understandings which can offer us an accurate and balanced perception of the present.

Taking Care of Their Heritage became a project, and has now flourished for several years. Peter Anderson, an Andover teacher, describes the ways in which the second year built upon the experiences of the first.

A project's first year is, in some ways, an artificial experience. That is because those interested in an idea will exceed reasonable human limits to see that the idea succeeds. This was largely the case with the first year. It seemed that the obvious question was: could it be done a second time with an allowance toward the more human considerations of time and interest and energy? While the first year of a project proves an idea possible, the succeeding years will prove its viability and credibility.

The pats on the back we received for the first volume were short-lived. September of 1978 brought with it some rigorous questioning. We had to make our second effort a better one, but we also had to figure out what "better" meant in this case. In short, we had to create a balance between the project's ideals and the practical aspects of making it work in a public school setting.

Our primary consideration was and will always be that of bringing young people and older adults together in the interest of breaking down stereotyped feelings, facilitating dialogue, and enabling our students to learn from a living source. Those goals have remained unchanged. The changes came when we began to rethink our educational objectives. We wanted to capitalize on and build on the students' awareness of others. We also wanted to establish standards of common courtesy and emphasize the development of oral and written skills. More than anything else, we were intent on making a community experience a relevant part of what went on in the classroom.

This year we expanded the program; we offered it to more students, we tried to include more older citizens. We asked that the students provide smoother transitions in their writing. Greater emphasis was placed on making an article readable without sacrificing the intergrity of the interviewees or their quotations. Equal value was given to the in-school components of the program.

Each of the persons written about in this book represents a minor success from our point of view. That is because they are people who feel good enough about themselves and their lives to talk to younger people. They are not larger than life. None invented or reinvented the wheel, and yet all have a story to tell. They have been an invaluable asset to us because they confirmed our conviction that every citizen has a story and every story is important...important enough to be listened to, recorded, and passed on.

The following excerpt from Volume II of *Taking Care of Their Heritage* incorporates a stylistic device that makes the interview itself, as well as the person being interviewed, more vivid to the reader. Although the words of the speaker provide the bulk of each story, student writers have added their own words to help in transition from one portion of the interview to the next. Descriptive segments almost make the reader feel like a witness to the interview and intensify the reader's involvement in the story as it unfolds.

Arthur Flynn
Interviewers: Monica McKinley, Kevin Hunt, Dan McDuffie

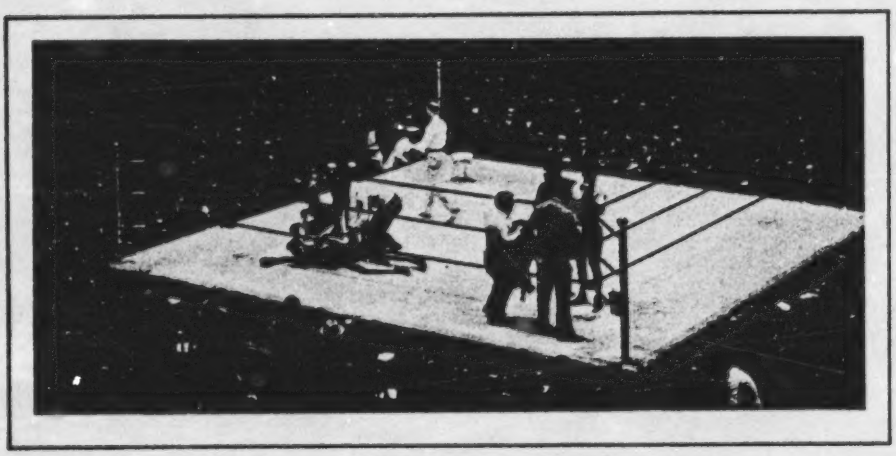
Arthur Flynn's muscular build and rugged facial features reflect his past athletic achievements. In a deep and rich, yet very gentle-mannered voice, he spoke to us of his memorable and fullfilling life.

Mr. Flynn's life is one of pride and accomplishment. Although his childhood neighborhood in Lawrence was hardly one of affluence, its families were closely knit and crime was virtually nonexistent. This is where his career began because it was as a young boy that he became interested in boxing. There were no gyms where young people could go and train for boxing; they had to make the best of things. They would draw a circle under an arc light and box, or go in someone's cellar. The firehouse, located across the street from Mr. Flynn's home, was where they trained.

As a young boy he had an unexplainable yen for boxing. "In those days various cigarettes would give you a token in the cigarette package—a picture of a ball player for example. And some kids had great collections of them; a few had boxing pictures. I was always fascinated by pictures of boxers. Some kids could tell you about a ball player's batting average and other statistics. I didn't care about that, but I could tell you about this fighter's record or that fighter's career".

"In those days they used to have a lot of smoke talks, as they called them. There was no television; radio was just in its infancy. You'd go in and buy a ticket and have a clay pipe and some tobacco, and they'd have boxing bouts or wrestling bouts. It was a genuine night out since there was so little that people could participate in. In that way I kind of got interested in boxing."

At that time, if a person didn't have any money to go to the fights, he would do just-about anything to crash the gate. One night at Sacred Heart School in South Lawrence, they had a big show. Arthur Flynn was determined to "crash" so he and a friend, Suds Kelley, sneaked into the men's room, and hid for hours, and in that way were able to get into the show when the doors opened. Little did Mr. Flynn know that this was also going to be his first public bout. "...there was a local guy who had become a sensation as an amateur boxer. Amateur boxing was a big thing in Lawrence in those days. The fellow he was supposed to box didn't show up. They asked me. Why they asked me I don't know, but they did. I did remarkably well, but I was frightened still. I went three tough rounds with him. This fellow's name was Al Duhaine.



Walking down South Broadway coming home I was walking on air because I'd done such a good job doing three rounds. When I got to the corner of Crosby and South Broadway my father was waiting for me. I was the big shot hero because I'd done such a good job with Al Duhaine, but my father...I thought he would murder me. It was 11:30 at night. It wasn't because I'd boxed. If he'd known I boxed in a public arena he'd have killed me. So that's about how it started. One step led to another...Later I was walking on Essex Street, and in Macartney's window was this display of what looked like jewelry for sale, a watch here and there and in the center was a diamond ring in a blue plush box. I always thought I'd like to own a diamond ring. Why I don't know, but I was fascinated by it. I said to my friend, "I think I'll go in and buy it tomorrow." He said, "You seem to have overlooked what you have to do to get the ring." And above the display was a sign stating that these were the prizes to be awarded at the amateur boxing show on such and such a night. My urge was so great for the diamond ring that I actually went down and signed up with the phoney name 'Dan Morgan.' After I signed up I didn't want to go through with it. I was scared stiff. I was afraid, however, that I would get arrested, since I signed too many papers to say I was an amateur. At any rate, I went and fought, and won the class and again I went home. The hall was on Essex Street. It was the old Winter Garden. It was a ritual after any event at the Winter Garden to cross the street to Foster's Lunch. I went into Foster's with my 'gang' of rooters, and, oh, was I a big shot with my diamond ring. Suddenly I looked at the clock and it was after twelve o'clock. 'Holy Moses,' I thought,' Me, the local champ, still I'll get killed for getting home at this hour.' I ran all the way up Essex Street to the Central Bridge to Crosby, and I tiptoed into the house, and I got a punch in the chin when I entered the door that almost flattened me. It was my mother. That was for coming in after twelve. What a soft touch that class would have been for her that night, if she'd fought! At any rate that was kind of how it all started."

FOCUS ON ETHNICITY

1. A PORTUGUESE ODYSSEY

Who: sixth graders
Unique feature: providing role models for bilingual students

2. AMERICAN ROOTS

Who: high schools students
Unique feature: pairing students of diverse backgrounds to create a theatre piece

One advantage oral history has over textbook learning is that it creates a channel for communication between people who are of different generations, ethnic groups,and nationalities. In order to collect oral histories, people must talk to people. The two projects described in this section used oral history to increase students' awareness of ethnicity—their own and others'. Oral history provides first hand a means of learning about other peoples' experiences and beliefs. By doing so it takes students beyond stereotypes to a perception of people as individuals who grew up at a particular time, in particular circumstances, surrounded by a specific set of cultural values. As students begin to gain insight into the influences shaping a person's life experiences, perceptions, and decisions, the result can be, as it was in the following projects, an increase in tolerance, empathy, and self-esteem.

A PORTUGUESE ODYSSEY

In New Bedford, at the Hayden-McFadden Elementary School, oral history is used with fourth, fifth, and sixth graders, as part of the Multiculture Neighborhood Project directed by Sandra Chen.

Ms. Chen describes one aspect of the oral history program: "As part of a unit of study on Portugal and Portuguese-Americans, five classes, several of which were bilingual, interviewed five people of Portuguese background: three parents, the director of the Immigrants' Assistance Center, and a prominent retired educator. The three parents spoke in Portuguese and a bilingual student acted as translator for those who did not understand the language. After the interviews, students represented what they had heard in a variety of forms, including mobiles, booklets, a mural, and written impressions." Interviews were conducted in the classroom with the entire class involved in the interview of one person, thus making the activity a feasible model for teachers who want to begin an oral history project but feel constrained by time limitations and logistical details.

The following "inspiring impression" was written by Maria Biscaia, a sixth grader in a third year bilingual class taught by Joseph O'Neil. The students in this class, who had immigrated to the United States from Portugal, interviewed Miss Laurinda Andrade, a seventy-nine year-old retired teacher. She was herself a Portuguese immigrant who had struggled and achieved a highly respected position in the community.

An important by-product of using oral history in this way is that it both provides the students with an inspirational role model and enhances their self-image: "I feel better because she's older and she went to college to be a teacher. She gave me hope;" "I think her story was very special to me. If she could do it, I can do it, too."

Maria H. Bircaia May 23, 1979

English

Miss Andrade

Miss Andrade came from Azores Islands. She came from Terceira. When she came to America the life was a little hard. She just came with five dollars. She was going to stay with a family that was going to another part of the country. When she came, the family wasn't there and she didn't have anybody to go with..

She went to East Taunton with a person that knew that Miss Andrade had no one to care for her, so they took her.

The first job that she had was in a cotton factory. When she was teaching Portuguese she felt that she knew more in Portuguese than in another language.

Miss Andrade did want to be a teacher, because she said that everybody imitates another and that's why she wanted to be a teacher. She felt that she could be a good teacher.

I think that Miss Andrade is very good lady because she gave us very good examples. If she did it during that time, we can do it now.

AMERICAN ROOTS

The American Roots program combines oral history and theater in an experiential approach to the study of immigration and migration in twentieth century American history. The program and its resulting theater production, *Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow: Melting Pot U.S.A.*, represent the collective efforts of Theatre Workshop Boston and students, teachers, and parents from Winchester and Copley Square High Schools. Students worked intensively in small multi-ethnic groups, collecting information from family and friends through interviewing, and then creating a theater piece that made a statement about life as experienced by different ethnic groups. Daena Giardella of Theater Workshop Boston describes the intent of the project and ways in which the memories were shaped into theater:

A significant and interesting part of the American Roots program was the interview process in which students had the opportunity to collect information about their ethnic roots from family members and friends. Each student was asked to conduct at least four interviews; some formulated their own questions and format, while others utilized an interview outline which we provided. In all cases, students were encouraged to be flexible, to allow the natural flow of communication to develop, to avoid feeling bound by specific questions or goals. It was soon found that these personal accounts of family background shed new light on everybody's awareness of various historical periods. Many humorous anecdotes were shared with the group. One girl was surprised to find that the same "facts" about life in the old days were recalled in entirely different ways by different family members. In general, the interviewing provided students with the chance for sharing with each other, while at the same time becoming active participants in the recording of their own history.

The interviews provided rich material for the immediate translation of new discoveries into tangible dramatic form—an idea for a scene, a song, a character based on anecdotes from the interviews. Thus, we witnessed the excitement of seeing "history" and "herstory" transformed into "ourstory"—*Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: Melting Pot, U.S.A.*

A major connecting point of theater and history can be seen in the realm of stories. History comes alive through theater; theater becomes relevant through history. In the case of "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," many stories were woven together. Some scenes were based on the plot of an actual event described during the interview. And, in some instances, students extracted the essence of real ancestral characters and placed them in hypothetical situations where they might have encountered one another. The results were believable scenes which reflected the personal history of the students as well as pertinent social history of the early 1900's.

Students were also asked to interview people from ethnic groups other than their own in order to derive new insights and ideas for a scene dealing with stereotypes. The interviewees shared many anecdotes related to experience with ethnic prejudice. With the help of staff members, students wove this material into a stereotyped sculpture scene which showed "people statues" being molded and released from ethnic slurs. This scene was particularly interesting because it gave everyone a chance to identify with the pride and struggles of other ethnic groups.

In many ways this interview approach was at the very heart of our goals to help students explore their ethnic roots and those of others in the creation of an original theater piece.

The broad variety of ethnic backgrounds among the students was reflected in a discussion session where we discovered that over twenty-three different groups were represented. As the trust developed, so did the sharing of new questions and understandings.

FOCUS ON A TIME

1. GOLDEN ERA

Who: junior and senior high school students
Unique feature: using oral history as one segment of a larger community endeavor

2. HUMAN CHOICES

Who: eighth graders
Unique feature: putting students in someone else's shoes

"Too often we forget that history is, among other things, an exercise of the imagination. History, like life, is a test of our ability imaginatively to place ourselves in the positions of other people, so that we can understand the reasons for their actions."* The two projects described in this section use oral history to look at particular times in the past. Both projects look backwards in order to help students understand and evaluate issues and decisions that may confront them in the future. Oral history, because it personalizes events, makes it much easier to take the imaginative leap into another's shoes and another's decision making process.

GOLDEN ERA

In conjunction with an effort to call attention to the revitalized central city in Springfield, the Cultural Education Collaborative, a non-profit educational planning agency, coordinated the efforts of two recreational agencies, a senior citizen group, and a high school history class in order to investigate the city from 1865 to 1915, a period when Springfield flourished economically, socially, and culturally. As part of an extensive public education program sponsored by the collaborative, the narrative accounts of people who were alive during this era were published in a booklet entitled *Youth Investigates Springfield's Golden Era.* The collaborative describes the background and organization of the program:

Realizing that one of the purposes of looking backward is to help today's citizens and tomorrow's leaders make informed decisions about the city's future, the collaborative approached the Youth Projects division of the National Endowment for the Humanities for funds to create a small pilot program entitled Youth Investigates Springfield's Golden Era. This oral history program had several goals: to introduce young people to oral history techniques through instruction by a skilled teacher, to give the youth participants an opportunity to directly learn about Springfield's past by interviewing senior citizens who were youths themselves during the "golden era," and to develop a spirit of cooperation and collaboration among the several groups involved in the project.

Virginia Allison of the Cultural Education Collaborative served as director of the program. The Springfield Boys' Club and Carew Hill Girls' Club provided the youth team and facilities for the meetings. The Springfield Golden Age Club provided the senior citizens to be interviewed. South Hadley High School history teacher Richard Sirvint served as the oral history instructor; his honors history class students transcribed and edited the taped interviews.

Youth Investigates Springfield's Golden Era took place on five Wednesdays after school. At the initial meetings the youth team and senior citizens met each other and discussed what oral history is, and what memories each had about their own past as well as the past of Springfield. They learned how to use a tape recorder, how to identify tapes, and how to ask and follow-up on questions. Questions were developed on such topics as work, education, home life, recreation, transportation, and entertainment. At the next two meetings each youth was paired with a senior citizen, and taped a one-hour interview with his/her partner, using the questions developed by the participants. These tapes were then transcribed by the high school history class. Finally, youths and senior citizens discussed the value of the experience. They felt the program was not only a learning experience about Springfield's past, but also a learning experience in intergenerational and racial understanding.

*James Hoopes, *Oral History, An Introduction for Students* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979),p.3.

The following excerpt reflects details of life in Springfield's Golden Era.

Henry Keough
Interviewer: Louis Brady

Henry: At that time you want to remember, Louis, that automobiles weren't as popular as they are today because they were just coming out. And they were always having considerable trouble with it. And of course, when you were going from one town to another it was all dirt road. The people at that time, there weren't many people that could afford to buy a car then, although cars were a lot cheaper than they are now.

Louis: What about bicycles?

Henry: Well, I always had a bicycle. Years ago when I was young they used to have what they called bicycle clubs. They were originated by the Hindy Motorcycle Company, because they used to make bicycles as well as motorcycles. And on a Sunday it would be nothing for a bicycle club to ride all the way from Springfield to Hartford and back. That would be an outing for a day and they would start early in the morning and get back at about five o'clock at night.

Louis: Did you enjoy that?

Henry: Oh, yeh, we used to have a lot of fun on those rides. Of course we had to watch out to be sure that everybody stayed in order and nobody got lost. We generally had an older person with us so if anything happened to the bicycle they could take care of it and somebody wouldn't be hung up on the road.

Louis: What did you enjoy most about a bicycle?

Henry: Well, I used to enjoy going with other boys on a trip like that and, of course, at that time they used to have a baseball league. They would have a team from each playground. They would have seventy pounders, and ninety pounders, and 125 pounders. The only way to play baseball was to ride our bikes to the field. And I can remember one time riding a boy on the handlebars and another one on the carrier. They used to have a seat over the back wheel, a carrier they called it. I pumped the bicycle and there was a boy in front and a boy in back and they were carrying bats and gloves.

Louis: I want to ask about the carrier bicycle. What was that like?

Henry: Well, it was just a square piece of metal on an oblong piece of metal that was about six or seven inches wide and about twelve inches long and it had a couple of braces and went down and hooked onto the bicycle, where the bolt went through to connect the wheel to the frame of the bicycle. And you bolted the seat, and of course, other times they had a basket that they used to hook on the front of it for the girls who were riding bicycles, because they didn't like to have the carriers on the back. And when they went to the store or to go visiting, they would put what ever they wanted in the basket on the front of the bicycle and I'm sure that you've seen some of those.

Louis: What was it like traveling around in a trolley?

Henry: Very enjoyable, especially during the summer period. They used to have open air trolleys. There were no sides. You used to get breezes as you were driving along. The big event was to ride the trolley from Court Square, Springfield, to Riverside Park in Agawam.

Louis: In your opinion, was Riverside Park anything like it is today?

Henry: Hardly at all. There was the old Mill Stream. They had boats that were shaped like a square gondola. There was the ride through a dark tunnel.

Louis: I'd like to ask about the part of town that you were living in at that time. Where was that and would you like to say a little bit about that.

Henry: The part of town that I was living in then was on Beech St. That's the section between the south end of Springfield and Forest Park. And that enabled me to go down and see my old friends at the South End without having to walk all that distance. And that was another great thing, was that I could ride my bicycle down there and it wouldn't take me so long.

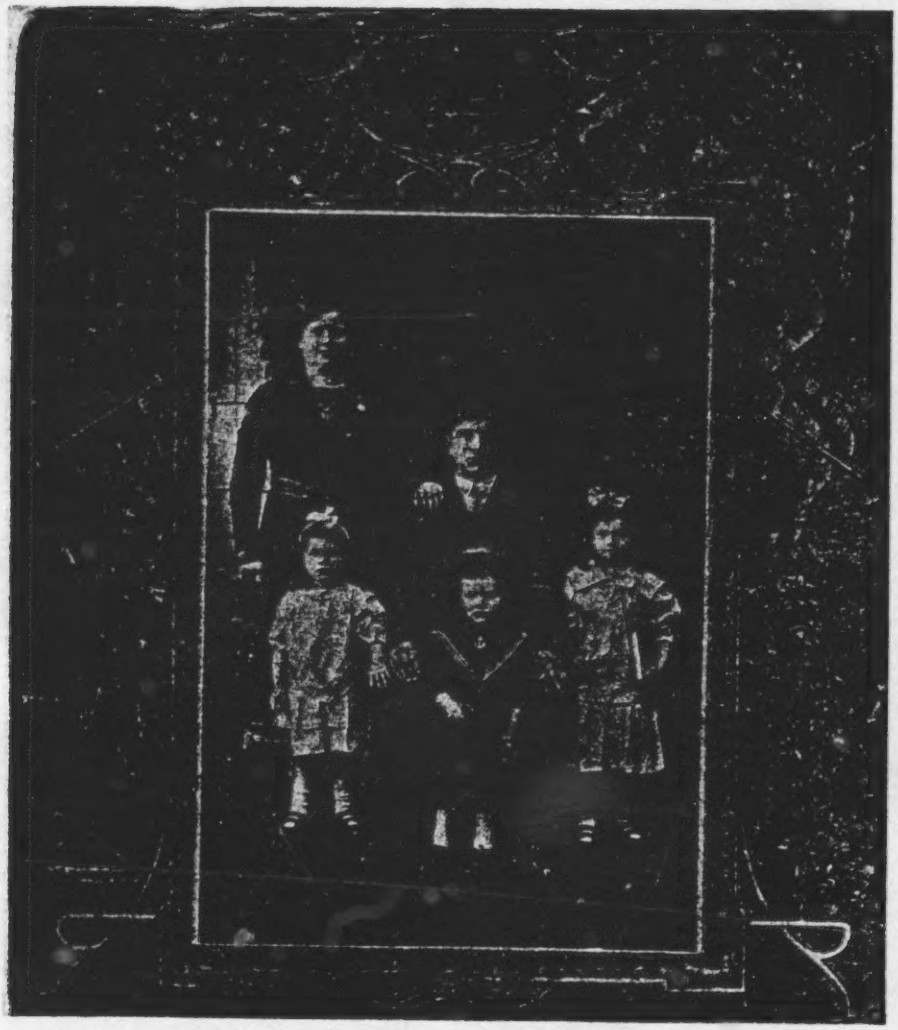
Louis: I'd like to ask a little bit about the condition of the South End back then.

Henry: Some of the streets down there weren't paved, they were just dirt roads. Then gradually the city hardened them and it made it a lot easier to travel. I remember in my days they used to have what was called "creosol" wooden blocks. And that's what they used for a pavement in the road. After they put those blocks in they would cover them with a tar and then they would sand it down until the tar was dry, and those roads lasted pretty good.

HUMAN CHOICES

Eighth graders in the Brookline Public Schools are learning about the Holocaust in Hitler's Germany and the Armenian Genocide through unique curricula based in part on oral histories. Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior, developed by Margot Strom and William Parsons, makes use of oral histories of survivors and others involved in genocides through tapes, transcripts, and guests in the classroom. The strengths of oral history as an adjunct to traditional sources of information—its ability to personalize historical events and raise issues by presenting differing or unique points of view—are perfectly suited to currricula which basically investigate the role and responsibilities of the individual within a given society. In this case, oral history gives students insight into very particular situations within the context of exploring large, abstract questions. It also provides students with a unique variety of models for coping with actual situations; hearing the stories of real people extends their limited experience and ability to empathize. This broadened understanding can then be used to illuminate the major questions of the unit: What is law? What is social justice? What is freedom? Why did it happen? How could it happen? What would I have done? What should I have done? The oral histories are used to increase the students' awareness that all individuals are surrounded by particular sets of constraints and values, and are constantly faced with choices they must make to the best of their ability. An appreciation of the factors that limit and determine those choices, particularly if gained at first hand, must make educators and students more understanding of the complexity of issues underlying historical and current events, and more sympathetic to the people involved.

Many students say that the single most meaningful experience of the unit is the opportunity to hear and question at firsthand someone intimately involved in events. In some cases they have read the transcript of an interview before meeting the person. In other cases it is a first meeting, although they generally have a preliminary knowledge of events, as in the case of speaking with a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto after seeing the film, *Warsaw Ghetto*.Even when tapes or transcripts are the only testimony, they have a special impact on the students, most of whom identify strongly with first person accounts.



The curricula particularly engage teenagers because the issues are of great immediacy to them. Students are confronted with moral dilemmas and asked to think about what they would do in particular situations. What considerations would affect their decisions? Often what appears from the outside to be a simple choice becomes very difficult as the students are led to complicate their thinking by gaining more and more understanding of the forces governing another's life. Having established and personalized, with the help of oral history, key concepts and issues, the curricula go on to examine the genocides in light of them.

RESOURCES

In this section you will find a list of Massachusetts organizations and teachers willing to be called upon as oral history resources. There are no doubt many other names that should appear on the list but simply did not come to the attention of the VOICES project.

BOSTON

The Children's Museum
Museum Wharf
300 Congress Street
Boston, MA 02210
Contact: Judy battat
The Children's Museum has a variety of oral history resources. In "Meeting Ground," a multicultural exhibit, there are stories about the immigration of people from a cross-section of Boston ethnic groups. The Native American program of the museum features a study—storage area where visitors have access to contemporary New England Indian crafts and to taped interviews with the craftspeople themselves. In the resource center's ethnic study section, oral history materials are being assembled, including both "how-to" and collected histories. There are also materials relating to "work" and other American history themes.

School Volunteers of Boston Inc.
16 Arlington Street
Boston, MA 02116
Contact: Eleanor Swartz
School Volunteers will pair Boston classrooms with elder-care for oral history interview projects.

Theater Workshop Boston
7 Eliot Street, Eliot Hall
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130
Contact: Hassan Gebel
The Theater Workshop staff is experienced in training groups of students to create and produce theater pieces based on oral history interviews.

BROOKLINE

Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior
25 Kennard Rd.
Brookline, MA 02146
Contact: William Parsons or Margot Strom

Survivors of both the Holocaust and Armemian Genocide are willing to come to classrooms. Curriculum materials and teacher training workshops are also available.

CONCORD

The Concord Historical Commission
46 Kenney Lane
Concord, MA 01742
Contact: Renee Garrelick
The Concord Historical Commission will work with Concord teachers of different grade levels to encourage the use of the Commission's photographic and tape archives. The Commission has also produced a slide-tape of a 'group memory swap': that includes taped recollections of elders reminiscing about life in Concord at the turn of the century.

GLOUCESTER

Gloucester Museum School
C/O The Milton Fuller School
Blackburn Circle
Gloucester, MA 01930
Contact: Emily Nickerson, Philip Salzman or James Schoel
The Gloucester Museum School offers Gloucester High School students outdoor activities and community-based projects, including boat construction, environmental studies and local history. The local history course includes publishing a magazine based on oral history interviews as well as teaching sixth graders about local issues.

LINWOOD

Valley Adult Counseling Service
154 Linwood Street
Linwood, MA 01525
Contact: Virginia Woodwell
Spun Yarns, a journal dedicated to preserving the cultural wisdom and heritage of elders living in the mill towns along the Blackstone River, is a community project based on the belief that a link with the past promotes community mental health.

NEWTON

Ethnic Heritage Studies Project
Education Development Center
55 Chapel Street
Newton, MA 02160
Contact: Robert Hayden
Teenagers from five ethnic groups in Boston have been doing oral history and photographic research.

SPRINGFIELD

American International College
Oral History Center
Springfield, MA 01109
Contact: Theodore B. Belsky
The Oral History Center trains both high school teachers and community volunteers. In addition to maintaining oral history tape archives for research, the center produces publications of interest to teachers and community groups. Their most recent publication is *The Black Community in Holyoke, 1770-1970 by Ella DiCarlo, a history using traditional and oral sources.*

Cultual Education Collaborative
49 Chestnut Street
Springfield, MA 01103
Contact: Virginia Allison or Carla Rosati
Youth Investigates Springfields Golden Era was published in the fall of 1979. copies are available through the collaborative.

STURBRIDGE

Museum Education Department
Old Sturbridge Village
Sturbridge, MA 01566
Contact: Warren Leon or Alberta Sebolt
The Teacher Center at Old Sturbridge Village offers workshops for teachers focusing on community studies, local history, using resources, etc. Staff are available for in-school workshops. Resources for teachers including primary source materials organized around the themes of "family," "work," and "community" are available in packet form for classroom use. *The Small Town Sourcebook* and *The Worcester Sourcebook* are starting points for investigating local history. Oral histories are linked to photographs, paintings, maps, and old advertisements to stimulate student interest in the past and to encourage them to analyze their own lives. Guides with extensive suggestions for activities are available for both books. The guide for *The Small Town Sourcebook* includes a suggested approach for organizing a class oral history project. The books are designed for the middle grades, but by adapting the activities they can be used by high school students.

WILBRAHAM

Project Blueberry
Minnechaug Regional High School
621 Main Street
Wilbraham, MA 01095
Contact: David Bernstein or Greg Trimmer
Project Blueberry has been videotaping people, places and issues within the two towns of Wilbraham and Hampden. All tapes are produced by students. Cable television programs produced include oral histories of town residents and institutions. The project offers student-run workshops to raise public awareness about Project Blueberry. Workshops also cover production techniques and various philosophies of writing.

Teachers

High School and Beyond

		Publication
Peter Anderson Sean Kennan	Andover Public Schools 36 Bartlett St. Andover, MA 01810	*Taking Care of Their Heritage*
Andy Kzirian	Watertown High School Armenian Bilingual Project 51 Columbia St. Watertown, MA 02172	
Denise M. Moorehead	Roxbury Community College 424 Dudley St. Roxbury, MA 02119	
Richard B. Sirvint	South Hadley High School 153 Newton St. South Hadley, MA 01075	*Oral History Manual for Teachers of American History*
Ernest A. Wright Jr.	Newton North High School 360 Lowell Ave. Newtonville, MA 02160	*Fettucine and Footscrapers*
Shirley Anne Wilson	Woburn Senior High School 88 Montvale Ave. Woburn, MA 01801	*Who Are You? We Are Reflections of Italo-Americans*

Middle Schools (grades 6-8)

Joan Eldridge	Mary E. Curley Middle School 493 Centre St. Jamaica Plain, MA 02130	*Our School, Our Community*
Elizabeth Feldman	Edison Middle School 60 Glenmont Rd. Brighton, MA 02135	*Reflections-Recollections*
Lisa Hirsh	Lincoln School 194 Boylston St. Brookline, MA 02146	
Barbara Lipke	Runkle School 50 Druce St. Brookline, MA 02146	

Elementary School

E. Ann Ahern and Sandra Gibson	Brimfield Elementary School Wales Road Brimfield, MA 01010	*Smalltown Sourcebook*
Sandra Chen	Hayden-Mcfadden School 361 Cedar Grove St. New Bedford, MA 02746	
Marcy Prager	Edith C. Baker School 205 Beverly Rd. Brookline, MA 02167	

READINGS

Doing Oral History - Theory and Practice
Four Paperbacks that Cover the Subject

Baum, Willa K. *Oral History for the Local Historical Society.* Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1971.

This comprehensive and concise manual, with useful advice for anyone starting an oral history program, includes information on everything from organizing people according to their talents through the ethics of oral history to transcribing, ordering, and preserving of materials

Hoopes, James. *Oral History, An Introduction for Students.* Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1979.

Combining a great deal of practical information with a careful and critical discussion of the place of oral history in historical research, this book is engagingly written, appropriate for high school or college level students.

Wigginton, Eliot. *Moments: The Foxfire Experience.* Washington, DC: Ideas, 1975.

In this moving account Wigginton details his reasons for beginning the Foxfire project, how it works, and perhaps most important, the human benefits to both students and the community.

Wood, Pamela. *You and Aunt Arie.* Magnolia, CO: Ideas, 1975.

This highly readable manual is designed for high school students wishing to produce a publication about their own community. It includes detailed diagrams, descriptions, and examples of many stages of different processes such as transcribing tapes, developing film, editing texts, and distributing the publication.

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If you would like detailed information explaining how to begin an oral history project with your students, write to the VOICES Project for a copy of "Oral History in Your Classroom: Getting Started."

VOICES PROJECT
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